

REMARKS

Claims 1, 14, 26, and 27 are amended to replace the word "and" with "or" in the list of possible cleaning agents. It is submitted that the amendment does not alter the scope of the claims. The claims were written so that the cleaning agent comprises at least one of the items identified in the list of cleaning agents. The claims were not written to characterize that the cleaning agent includes "at least one of" each of the components i-iv. The amendment removes any potential ambiguity concerning that issue. Accordingly, no new matter or new issues are raised by the amendment, and entry of the amendment is requested. Upon entry, claims 1-11, 13-23, and 25-27 are active in this application.

The outstanding Office Action includes a rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-6, 10, 14, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over *Miracle et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,576,282). This rejection is traversed.

The invention is directed to a solid detergent composition and to a method for solidifying a detergent composition. The solid detergent composition includes an effective amount of a cleaning agent to provide soil removal and an effective amount of a binding agent dispersed throughout the solid detergent composition to provide the detergent composition as a solid at room temperature. The binding agent comprises a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate. The Applicants discovered that the binding agent can be used to solidify or harden the detergent composition to provide an extruded or cast solid.

Miracle et al. fail to disclose or suggest a solid detergent composition or a method for solidifying a detergent composition that utilizes a binding agent according to the present invention. Specifically, *Miracle et al.* fail to disclose a binding agent comprising a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate. The outstanding Office Action fails to explain why one having ordinary skill in the art would have received the suggestion to modify *Miracle et al.* to achieve the presently claimed invention. Specifically, no rationale has been provided to explain why one would modify *Miracle et al.* to include a binding agent comprising a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal

bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate as provided by the present invention.

The outstanding Office Action refers to Example VII of *Miracle et al.* for the disclosure of a "laundry bar suitable for hand-washing soiled fabrics." It is pointed out that the laundry bar disclosed by Example VII of *Miracle et al.* does not include a binding agent according to the present invention. Example VII of *Miracle et al.* fails to disclose a binding agent comprising a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate. According to Example VII of *Miracle et al.*, sodium carbonate is present at a level of 5 wt.%, which is well below the lower limit of about 10 wt.% required by the claimed invention. Example VII of *Miracle et al.* fails to disclose the presence of any alkali metal bicarbonate, which is a component of the claimed invention.

It is believed that the "bar" disclosed in Example VII of the *Miracle et al.* relies upon a solidification mechanism that is completely different from the binding agent according to the present invention. It is believed that the "bar" disclosed by Example VII of *Miracle et al.* relies upon the 30 wt.% of C₁₂ linear alkyl benzene sulfonate and the 2 wt.% coconut monoethanolamide as waxy solids that hold the other solid components of the composition together. Clearly, there is not a binding agent resulting from an interaction of alkali metal carbonate, alkali metal bicarbonate, and water to hold the "bar" of Example VII of *Miracle et al.* together. Furthermore, no reason has been offered to suggest modifying Example VII of *Miracle et al.* to replace the binding agent of C₁₂ linear alkyl benzene sulfonate and coconut monoethanolamide with a binding agent comprising a result of mixing about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% alkali metal carbonate, about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.% alkali metal bicarbonate, and a sufficient amount of water to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate.

The outstanding Office Action additionally points to *Miracle et al.* at column 12, lines 18+ for the disclosure of various builders. It is recognized that *Miracle et al.* mention carbonates and bicarbonates in a list of builders. Clearly, carbonate is a well-known builder. It is pointed out, however, that *Miracle et al.* fail to recognize that carbonate and bicarbonate can be provided so that they react with water to form a binding agent that will solidify a composition. According to the claimed invention, the water is present to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the

alkali metal bicarbonate to form the binding agent. The Examiner's attention is directed to the specification of the above-identified patent application at page 21, lines 6-19. Such a teaching is absent from the disclosure of *Miracle et al.*

Furthermore, although *Miracle et al.* mention carbonate and bicarbonate as possible builders, there is no disclosure by *Miracle et al.* of how much of the carbonate and the bicarbonate should be used together. Clearly, there is no suggestion by *Miracle et al.* that alkali metal carbonate should be provided at a level of about 10 wt.% to about 80 wt.% and alkali metal carbonate should be provided at a level of about 1 wt.% to about 40 wt.%, and that a sufficient amount of water should be provided to react with the alkali metal carbonate and the alkali metal bicarbonate to provide a binding agent so that the resulting detergent composition is provided as a solid. Such a disclosure is missing from *Miracle et al.*

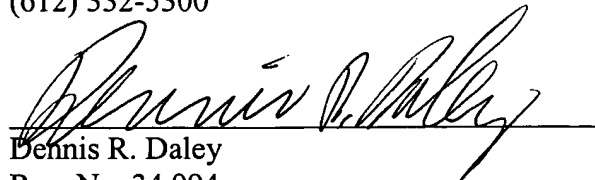
The outstanding Office Action fails to demonstrate why one having ordinary skill in the art would have modified *Miracle et al.* to provide the carbonate, bicarbonate, and water components in amounts sufficient to achieve a binding agent that results in a solidified detergent composition. Nowhere do *Miracle et al.* disclose or suggest using carbonate, bicarbonate, and water as a binding agent.

In view of the above comments, *Miracle et al.* would not have suggested the presently claimed invention, and withdrawal of the rejection over *Miracle et al.* is requested.

It is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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